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AFRICA

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THE PLACE OF THE NORTH-EASTERN TRANSVAAL SOTHO IN THE SOUTH BANTU COMPLEX

EILEEN JENSEN KRIGE

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THE Sotho of the North-Eastern Transvaal Lowveld occupy an area with fairly well-marked geographical boundaries. To the east, the Game Reserve, low-lying, unhealthy, very sparsely populated even in the old days, remains an effective barrier to contact with and further migrations from the Shangana-Tonga of Portuguese East Africa. South are the Olifants River and the towering Drakensberg range curving north-west then northwards to merge into the well-marked escarpment on the west dividing Lowveld from Highveld. On the north the Klein Letaba river roughly demarcates our area from the Venda and the Shangana-Tonga of the Knobnose Location. The Sotho-speaking Venda of Tswale and Moila, who fall well within this area, resemble in culture their Sotho-ized neighbours more than their own Venda kin to the north; but the Shangana-Tonga, who occupy most of the lower-lying eastern and north-eastern portion of the area and comprise at least one-third of its total population, are unassimilated strangers of different stock coming from the north-east and east. They have been entering since about 1840, usually in small bands, at first seeking the protection of and subjecting themselves to the Sotho owners of the land. On the arrival

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of the white man, some of their headmen were granted independent locations which have served as nuclei for the building up of more united tribal groups. (See accompanying map.)

The most important Sotho tribes of this area are the Lobedu, the Narene and the Khaha who together comprise about three-quarters of the total Sotho population.[1] The outstanding demographical feature is, however, the numerical predominance of the Lobedu who, with a population of well over 40,000, are not only the greatest tribe, but outnumber all the other Sotho-speaking tribes put together.[2] The pre-eminence and cultural influence of the Lobedu in this area does not rest solely upon their numerical preponderance. It is based largely upon the fame of their queen, Modjadji, who, as the greatest rain-maker in the Northern Transvaal, is not only regularly approached with gifts by other chiefs but also sometimes places them on the throne (*ho bea bokoši*) and is appealed to in cases of disputed succession.

This area, though forming part of a greater cultural whole including the Northern Transvaal Highveld and probably Pediland to the south, is, however, sharply characterized by distinctive features, such as ritual suicide of the chief and recognition of women as rulers in their own right, that are not found elsewhere. These are sufficient to form a fairly well-defined culture pattern, which, owing to the overwhelming numerical preponderance of the Lobedu, if for no other reason,

[1] The Sotho population of our area is made up as follows, according to van Warmelo:

Lobedu	8137 taxpayers.		
Narene	5521	"	(Makhoba 1332, Letswalo 1189).
Khaha	2608	"	
Thabina (Mazeboya)	1088	"	
Phalaborwa	335	"	
Makwibe	300	"	
Baba Mamidja	413	"	
Shai or Tsolye	256	"	
Tswale	337	"	Sotho-speaking Venda.
Molia	260	"	

The only large tribal groups among Shangaan-Tonga are

Mokhaba	1918 taxpayers.	
Nwamitwa	1347	"

[2] The proportion is Lobedu 8137 taxpayers.

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one might call the Lobedu culture complex, though it is not at all clear what the origin of its differentiating features is. In its most typical form this culture is found among the Lobedu of Modjadji, the Letswalo and the Khaha. To the north-west it merges into the not very different Venda culture complex; to the south, Pedi influences, noticeable on the edge of the Drakensberg, become increasingly apparent among the Mahlo and eventually predominate among the Bala Mamidja on the banks of the Olifants. In the east, the Phalaborwa have developed specialized responses to the challenge of an arid bushveld environment; while to the west along the escarpment, Tokwa influences are so marked that the Sekhopo branch of the Lobedu, who live there, differ more from the Lobedu of Modjadji than do the unrelated Khaha and Letswalo.[1] These gradations are to some extent hidden by the fact that owing to the mixed composition of every tribe differences in custom in any single tribe are often as great as differences from one tribe to another. The nature of this Lowveld cultural pattern, those features peculiar to this area and those held in common with other tribes, will best be shown by a short account in general terms of various aspects of the social and economic organization of these tribes.

GENERAL ASPECTS OF THE LOWVELD VILLAGE. The Lowveld village, nestling among the trees and shrubs of the surrounding bushveld vegetation, which usually provides a natural fence, differs in general aspect from that of the Highveld tribes with its well-smeared, high-walled courtyards. While there is a tendency in the south, among Narene of Segororo and to a lesser extent among Thabina and Maake's Khaha, for villages to straggle in lines along the hill-sides, there is nowhere any sign of the large agglomerations of dwellings so typical of the Tswana town and present in an attenuated form also among Tokwa of the Highveld. The Lowveld village is not large, consisting generally of from two to twenty huts; but there is evidence that when times were more unsettled and the need for protection kept

[1] The Birwa who live partly in the Lowveld, partly in the Highveld, probably belong to the Lobedu culture complex. Though their culture differs in many respects from that of the Lowveld tribes there are also marked similarities, such as ritual suicide of the chief.

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effective check the tendency for people to move away after every quarrel or accusation of witchcraft, villages were not only appreciably larger than to-day but also somewhat differently arranged, with both courtyard and cattle-kraal in the centre. Wherever possible the Sotho build on mountains, which are covered with a rich, loamy soil well suited to cultivation, are less fever-ridden than the valleys, and in the old days afforded better protection against enemies. Indeed, it is not until recent times that the valleys have been opened up even for agriculture. Within the village each married woman generally has two huts, kitchen- and sleeping-hut, while one or more fenced-in sections near the hedge are devoted to the storage of mealies on the job and beer-making activities.

TRIBAL ECONOMY. The tribes of the Lowveld are predominantly agricultural, possessing on the whole few cattle. Milk, which many adults find nauseating, plays a very minor part in their diet, milk taboos are unknown while the meat sacrifice is rare, beer taking its place. As among Venda and the Sotho of the Highveld, women are not as strictly excluded from contact with cattle as among the Nguni; not only is it common for girls to herd cattle in the absence of boys in town or at the circumcision school, but many women also possess cattle in their own right. While it would be impossible here to give a full account of Lowveld agriculture, it is of interest to enumerate some of its more salient aspects. Men take a considerable part in agricultural activities, every married man having one large field for which he is responsible. But while women plant every kind of crop, men grow and reap only mealies, grain crops, and sugar-cane; pumpkins, beans, ground- and monkey-nuts, &c., are considered as purely woman's concern. In our area, as elsewhere, these crops are mostly planted together in the same field, mealies predominating in some areas, kaffir-corn or millet being the chief crop in others. Partly as a result of congestion and partly in order to take advantage of differential climatic conditions as between mountain and valley, fields of any one family are generally very widely scattered, being sometimes as much as ten miles apart. Recognition of the food value of various wild fruit trees, such as the morula and wild fig, is shown by the fines attached to cutting them without special permission. An interesting feature

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of the agriculture of the more mountainous portions of the Lowveld is the use of terraces, or rather contour walls of stone, for there is no levelling of the ground in between, to prevent excessive washing away of soil. With the absence of men in the towns and the introduction of the plough with subsequent preference for valley cultivation, these contour walls are tending to fall into disuse.

Division of labour between the sexes is the same here as among Venda and the Highveld tribes of the Northern Transvaal. While care of cattle is the province of men and agricultural work is done by both sexes, cooking and housekeeping is confined to women. Men are responsible for the erection of storage receptacles, renewal of pantry and village enclosures and the lion's share in hut-building, including thatching, for women do only plastering of walls and preparation of the floor. The crafts confined to men are ironwork, work in skin, and all wood-work such as the manufacture of drums, platters, spoons, milk pails, stamping blocks, porridge twirlers, and flat winnowing baskets. Pottery is confined to women, but weaving and basketry (other than the making of winnowing baskets) is done by both sexes.

Political Organization and Position of the Chief. The most outstanding features of the Lobedu culture complex, which clearly differentiate the Lowveld tribes from their neighbours to the south and west, are ritual suicide of the chief and the possibility of women ruling in their own right.[1] Among the Lobedu the chief reigns for a period of four circumcision schools, each 'school' being separated from the previous one by a period of almost ten years, and then has to drink poison and die. The institution can hardly continue when its supporting background of ritual and belief is crumbling, but it has survived to this day; the immediate predecessors of the present Lobedu and Letswalo rulers died unnatural deaths in the traditional manner, Modjadji II in 1894 and Mamathola in 1905. There is in this area no conscious belief that growth of the crops, welfare of the cattle,

[1] These two features occur together in the most important tribes of the Lowveld such as the Lobedu, Khiba, Narene, Thabina. The only tribes to whom this institution is foreign are the Phalaborwa and Tsubye and the two Venda tribes of Mosha and Tswale. Sekhopo and Radwadu, sections of the Balobedu, broke away when the first women succeeded and themselves have only men rulers.

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and the regularity of the seasons are bound up with the life of the chief, but the identification of the earth with the chief in the phrase ' mabu a fesa ' (the earth is hot, burning) which is used by all Lowveld tribes as a euphemism to denote the illness or death of the chief, seems to imply some connexion between the life of the chief and the fertility of the earth. Some such association seems implicit also in the feeling among the Lobedu that the chief should have no physical defect (it is thought to be impossible for the queen to be ill, and the present queen has never had a day's illness), and should lead a secluded life, being seen by and giving audience to royal relatives and the nobility only. So close is the association between the ruler and the land he rules among the Lobedu that the chief may not leave the country or cross its boundaries, a taboo which made it impossible for Modjadji to register her vote at the nearest Native Commissioner's office in the recent elections for the Native Council.

The great power of the chief in the three most important tribes of the Lowveld lies in rain-making. Here we find as in so many other aspects of their culture an intensification of a feature present in modified form in many other tribes, leading to a difference as great or greater than the complete absence of the trait. Many chiefs in South Africa are great rain-makers, and tribes of the Highveld and Sekukuniland share with those of the Lowveld the custom in time of drought of sending young men to ' beat mofoko ' pegs around the country or to put out all the fires in the country and rekindle new ones in each village. But the Lowveld chiefs, especially Modjadji, are the greatest rain-makers of all, recognized in the old days as such by tribes as far south as the Swazi and Zulu, and rain ritual here has characteristic features not found elsewhere. Important among these is the custom of dancing for rain. When the rains do not come at the right time, it is usual for each headman in turn to come to the royal kraal with his followers to *kobe* rain by dancing for the chief, and when this does not help the women come as a last resort to do a special dance which is so exacting and causes so much crying on the part of small babies, who have to go hungry while their mothers dance, that it is believed the chief must be moved by it. This custom, still practised by the Lobedu, has died out elsewhere in the Lowveld, having been last performed among the Khaha in 1911. The belief that twins, mis-

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643 789 766 carriages, abortions, and people dying of any severe coughing illness prevent rain from falling unless specially buried in wet soil is found with variations all over the Lowveld, among Sotho and Shangana-Tonga alike.

643 588 644 [57] Women rulers have their 'wives' just as though they were men, and a peculiar feature of Lobedu culture is the large number of wives or *bathanesi* of the queen. Every Lobedu induna sends a daughter to be a *mothanesi* of the queen, as do also any of the nobility who wish to be on a good footing with her; and these, together with girls sent by foreign tribes as gifts for rain, form a large harem. *Bathanesi* of the chief occupy an honoured position at the Head Kraal, have, on the whole, less work than ordinary women and are a source of honour to their family who through them become privileged to call the queen their *tsitse*—bridegroom or son-in-law. They may be given in marriage to relatives of the queen or to commoners, in which case the peculiar situation arises of their children preferring [551] to call themselves sons and daughters of the queen, using the surname Modjadji, to taking the lineage name of their father. Often, however, the *bathanesi* remain with the queen, the ideal being to remain virgin for some years, after which they are given their own hut in the village and permission to have children. [565] A *mothanesi* of noble birth ranks higher than a commoner and can even bear the heir to the throne when the queen herself is barren. [184] Other Lowveld chiefs do not receive daughters from their headmen, though the Khaba and Letswalo used to accept girls from foreign chiefs for rain as did the Lobedu. These women became a link and source of friendship between the two tribes and, especially among Lobedu, played a real part in the gradual growth and influence of the tribe. Even the great Ngungunyane once sent women to Modjadji for rain, and there are, to-day still, at her head kraal sisters and daughters of important chiefs in the Northern Transvaal, though money and cattle have now been substituted for women in rain transactions.

643 [71] The legal heir to the throne is, in the Lowveld, the eldest son of the chief wife, who should always be the daughter of the chief's mother's brother. The cattle for this marriage are not, as among the Pedi and one or two Highveld tribes, contributed by all the headmen, nor are the fires in the country extinguished on the occasion of the marriage.

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marriage. Where the chief is a woman, her own son or daughter succeeds. The Lobedu now have a distinct preference for women rulers; the last three chiefs have been women, and the present queen succeeded in preference to her elder uterine brother. It would seem that the fashion was set by the Lobedu, for tribal genealogies show no women chiefs in the Lowveld prior to the accession of Modjadji I. Shortly after that we have the appearance of the first queen in the Khaha and Mamaila tribes, followed later by Letswalo and Mahlo. Lowveld tribes are no exception to the general tendency among Bantu for succession to the throne to be accompanied by trouble and bloodshed. They have, however, an interesting method of submitting the case of various claimants to the decision of the powers that be by the ordeal of trying the door. All claimants to the throne are brought to the closed door of the hut in which the old chief died. One by one, they step forward shouting their own name and ancestry to try the door which, while resisting all efforts of other claimants, flies open at the touch of the rightful heir.[1]

The Lowveld chief is assisted and advised in the government of his country by his relatives,[2] generally known as *bakhomana*. There are no formal councils, as among Tswana, and it is even doubtful whether the *pitso* or meeting of all adult men in the tribe ever had power to make decisions. Certainly to-day it is called only when orders or notices from European authorities have to be transmitted. No one in the Lobedu tribe ever knows what is happening even in important matters affecting them all, and the tribe accepts with equanimity the most outrageous favouritism of the royal family.

The district, bounded by natural features such as streams or depressions down the hill-sides, is generally quite small, varying in extent from about one square mile to five, so that in a country like Modjadji's with an area of some 140 square miles there are about 100 headmen. Aggregations of districts into larger units under subchiefs, such as are found in Zululand, though not unknown, are not

[1] Some one is, of course, inside to hold the door against the wrong claimants and in Modjadji's tribe the chief always has one hut with two doors, said to be for this purpose.

[2] The *rangwane* (father's brother) or *rakhadi* (father's sister) are often important advisers or, especially where a woman is ruling, the *malome* (mother's brother).

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634 624 characteristic of Lowveld political organization. Districts are still of great importance, and the district head is a busy and important man, both socially and politically. Contact with the European has resulted in two diverse tendencies observable in our area: among small tribes, 634 624 178 such as Phalaborwa and Sekhopo's Lobédu, there has been increased centralization, the chief taking over functions, such as allocation of land, which used to be the province of headmen; elsewhere, especially in the large kingdom of Modjadji, district headmen are in many respects becoming more independent, exacting from underlings labour to which they are not entitled and even controlling other districts to which they have no right.

624 562 Women may here, as among Venda, be heads of districts,[1] and, though the proportion of women to men is never high, they are often the most important district heads in the tribe. Women become headmen in a variety of ways: among Lobedu a woman of the royal family may be appointed head of an area (generally, nowadays, over newly-bought tribal land) and though in practice her husband may do most of the work, she it is who is recognized and approached in the last resort. A daughter of the chief house succeeds her father even if there are sons of other houses; a woman may succeed her husband when the children are too young, and though, strictly speaking, she is only a regent in this case, she often continues to rule until her death and long after her son has attained his majority. Or a *rakhadi* may be asked to act as regent for her nephew, in which case she very often secures the succession for her own son, ousting the rightful heir.

695 Law and Justice. The Lowveld was the land of the ordeal, the only method by which witchcraft could be discovered or difficult cases of theft and adultery, where evidence was inconclusive, be decided. Boiling medicated water which scalded only the hands of the guilty might be used or a concoction be drunk which intoxicated the culprit, leaving the innocent unaffected. Except for occasional use among the Phalaborwa, however, the ordeal has been completely ousted by the Shangane-Tonga smeller-out and a modern method of dealing with witchcraft has developed over the whole of the Lowveld, which has spread not only into Vendaland but also into portions of the

[1] Except among Phalaborwa, Tsolyo, and the people of Tzwale and Sekhopo.

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Highveld. When, after many private consultations with diviners, a man decides to make an accusation of witchcraft, he and the accused will *kitsha* or lay a wager of money or cattle on the matter, after which, accompanied by a witness, the 'ears of the chief', supplied by the Head Kraal, they set out to consult a far-away smeller-out, nearly always a Shangana-Tonga who lives too far to know anything of the people concerned. Unless the smeller-out is able to give the totems of all members of the party and successfully find an object that has been hidden beforehand, they will pass on to another until some one suitable is found. The verdict of the smeller-out is taken to court where it is always accepted and the guilty party told to pay his wager, the modern counterpart of the death penalty of old. A distinction between murder and accidental homicide is everywhere found in the Lowveld, punishment for the latter being the handing over of a girl to the injured family. She never returns home, nor does any bride-price pass.

Bantu etiquette, which makes it impossible for a case to be reported to the chief except through a third party, generally among other Sotho tribes one or two specially appointed men, has in the Lowveld given rise to a rather more complicated system whereby each district has its 'mother' at the Head Kraal, through whom reports are made and actions brought. Where a person in one district has a case at the Head Kraal against some one in another district, the 'mother' of the complainant's district will approach the 'mother' of defendant's district to call his 'children' to the court, and various payments are connected with the system. Most of the important men living at or near the Head Kraal are such 'mothers', many having more than one district in their charge.

FAMILY AND CLAN. There is among Lowveld Sotho no term distinguishing the father's from the mother's side of the family, the word *malobe* being used to denote all relatives whether on the father's side or the mother's; and in practice, whether at weddings or at working parties, both sets of relatives play an equally important, if sometimes different, part. A man inherits his totem and family name from his father, but in his education and social life his mother's people have great influence. Most children spend some years of their life with the

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855 mother's mother, especially in cases where the next baby has arrived before three or four years have elapsed; and a young motherless child is often sent by his father to his mother's brother's people (where his mother's mother will be) in preference to being handed over to a fellow wife of the mother, for it is generally considered that the mother's people are best able to rear (*hodisa*) a child.

593 A very special relationship exists between a man and his sister, especially his eldest sister, who is or will become the priestess of the family. She is the person who has greatest influence over him, who will be called to reason with him when even his parents are unable to persuade him. The sister whose cattle he used to obtain a wife also has a special interest in his household affairs. This house is the place where she will 'put her things' and make herself at home when visiting her old home; his daughter will one day marry her son; his wife may run to her or her elder sister if he ill-treats her, whereupon she will remonstrate with her brother or even in extreme cases arrange for permanent protection of such a woman away from her husband.

[753] The sister's rights are supported by a powerful sanction, for if she 'feels dissatisfied in her heart' owing to bad treatment at the hands of her brother, the ancestors are liable to make his children ill. When this happens, the brother will have to approach his sister humbly to come and end matters, after openly airing her grievances, by interceding with the ancestors on behalf of his children. Not all sisters are, however, in practice able to control and influence their brothers: here, as in all human relationships, much depends on the character and good sense of the parties concerned; and I have seen a 'bad lot' just back from town slap the face of a sister who had been called to remonstrate with him about a loose woman he had brought to his wife's house from town.

613 The clan, if it can be said to exist at all, does so only in a vague way, and there are no functions or usages associated with it. Relatives belong to no clearly marked group but can be traced in ever-widening circles from the individual family just as we trace relationships in our own society. There is no term for clan: *mulalo* refers to relatives on both father's and mother's side, while *khaya*, a word most commonly used to denote that portion of any village where the men sit, but also meaning court, clan, or tribe, is too vague in its connota-

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tion. There is no trace whatever in the Lowveld of the Twana ward. Lowveld tribes are totemic, but the totem is neither exogamous nor bound up with any single lineage group. People of the same totem are often not related at all and the lineage group cuts right across the tribe, relatives from the same place of origin and with the same totem often being found in several different tribes. Indeed, the tribe consists only of a small nucleus of members of the ruling family after which it is named, the greater portion being accretions from any and every neighbouring tribe. Thus the majority of members of the Narene are not Narene at all; they are Lobedu, Khaha, Phalaborwa, Kwena, Tokwa, and others who have joined the Narene at various times; and so it is with all Lowveld tribes.

FORMAL EDUCATION. The tribes of the Lowveld have five initiation schools, two, known as *khoba* and *lyale*, for girls, three, *bodika*, *boxwera*, and *komana*, for boys. These schools are not peculiar to the Lowveld; all of them are found also among Sotho tribes of the Highveld of the Northern Transvaal while some, like the *bodika* or circumcision, have a very wide distribution in South Africa. But the *lyale* and *boxwera* in our area have a typical form, not found elsewhere, being held at the same time, while the *komana* appears in its strongest and most characteristic form among Phalaborwa, Khaha, and Narene in the south of our area where, most probably, it had its origin, for it is absent from Pediland.

Khoba is the private initiation and seclusion of a girl at or shortly after reaching puberty when she is taught the things she should know and do as a woman. The *bodika* or circumcision school is too well known to merit attention here, but the *boxwera*, for boys, which in Sekukuniland and other parts of the Northern Transvaal is held alone, in the Lowveld is linked with and held together with the *lyale* girls' school, the central feature of which is a wonderful 'bird' in a special enclosure which appears on moonlight nights and dances and speaks in a whistle.[1] The true significance of the *komana* has not yet been

[1] In late years these schools have been languishing or dying out in the northern portion of our culture area. The Lobedu have held neither *lyale* nor *komana* for 30 years, while their last circumcision was in 1919. In the south of the area, on the other hand, all the schools are still in full swing, the Letswalo having held their last *bodika* in 1934 and *lyale* in 1936.

[See 2: Krige and Krige for further information on Lovedu cults — A.]

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881 794 established. Sometimes a school in which boys receive cuts on either side of the face, it is associated also with rain ritual and with the *dzimu* or ancestral spirits who come to earth and speak in a whistling, wailing manner.

794 An interesting feature of the Northern Transvaal is the tendency for private people, strangers from tribes who have certain schools, to set up schools with the permission of the chiefs in areas where they are not known. People are always willing to join them, and they are a source of great profit to the holder. Thus the Dikxale of the High-veld have no *Asomana*; but a Narene man who has come to live in the area has brought *Asomana* drums and holds schools to which many Dikxale go.

836 837 Sex Morality and Marriage. Sex morality among Lowveld tribes conforms to the general pattern found over South Africa in having pre-marital sex intercourse as an institution fully approved of by society as long as no children are born. Furthermore, adultery, which is an everyday occurrence, is not looked upon as serious in any way unless the parties are indiscreet and are discovered. Widows, especially, are recognized as easy prey to male advances even though they have been inherited by the husband's brother. The fine attached [684] to adultery is usually one head of cattle; but the general laxness is better illustrated in the attitude found among the Narene, where there is no fine attached to adultery, though a man caught in the act will [695] send something to the husband to beg pardon. In court, the bare word of a woman accusing a man of adultery is always accepted. [694] Seduction of a young girl is a much more serious offence than adultery, with the correspondingly higher fine attached to it of two head of cattle and a goat, and realization that marriage is much more than a sexual relationship between the parties concerned is shown in the fact that far from trying to promote marriage between the parties concerned, the parents of the girl will refuse any alliance with a boy whose people they do not consider suitable.

582 [71] Like all Sotho peoples, the Lowveld tribes have the institution of preferred marriage with certain relatives, in contrast to the Zulu-Xhosa with whom marriage with any related person is taboo. Fully 40 per cent. of all marriages are, in our Lowveld area, with the

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mother's brother's daughter, and in contrast to all surrounding Sotho tribes, Pedi to the south and Highveld tribes to the west where it is common, marriage with the father's brother's daughter is not considered possible. Cross-cousin marriage with the father's sister's daughter is known only among the Lobedu, where it is common within the royal clan, Khaba, where it is rare, and Moila's Venda. The prevalence of marriage with the mother's brother's daughter by which a girl is said to be 'born for' a son of a certain house and knows all her life she will marry there, has been a stabilizing influence leading to very much less illegitimacy resulting from the absence in towns of young men than is found in other areas where this type of marriage has broken down. A girl knows she will have to 'cook for' her father's sister, her future mother-in-law (indeed there is a definite moral value attached to this), and even in the absence of her husband-to-be will be married by the family. If, as a young married woman she has a child in the absence of her husband, it is an irregularity without serious social consequences. On the death of a spouse, sororate and levirate are common; marriage with the wife's brother's daughter is found where the wife is barren or dead, and full inheritance of a young wife of one's own father is quite common.

The custom of a woman being 'married' by a woman, too common in the Lowveld, is one often misunderstood by Europeans. Since a girl is 'born for' the son of her father's sister whose cattle made her father's marriage and her own birth possible, her father's sister may, even if she has no son, nevertheless 'marry' the girl, who will come and cook for her and have children by some appointed relative or by private lovers of her own choice. It is possible, though much rarer, for a woman rich in cattle to 'marry' a non-relative.

Though in the Lowveld as elsewhere the person responsible for payment of bride-price in a man's first marriage is his father or guardian and brothers and sisters are usually coupled, the cattle for the girl being used by the boy, it is not customary in the Lowveld, as is the case elsewhere, for any other relative to contribute. Here, when a man has no cattle, instead of begging from various relatives, he will proceed to 'show the knee' to a man rich in cattle, i.e., he will borrow cattle on the understanding that his first daughter will

3: Krige E-5 (1928-1938)1938 FX14 Lovedu FX14

583 [724] be handed over to the lender to become, in most cases, the wife of his son. To-day this custom is not as common as it used to be, owing to the fact that girls now often resist such a marriage, knowing that the European authorities will support them. No cattle or presents from the girl's people are ever handed over in marriage, and there is therefore nothing corresponding to the Zulu-Xhosa *ukuba*. But there is all over the Lowveld a special name and function associated with each beast and goat that is handed over, which, together with the fact that there is generally no fixed number, no organized bargaining, such as that which characterizes Pedi procedure, and that very few people complete payment of bride-price before marriage, illustrate the non-commercial character of this arrangement.

585 The most characteristic feature of marriage ceremonial in the Lowveld is the slow and tedious procession from the girl's to the boy's home, the bridal party having to be persuaded to move at each step by means of gifts, till finally on reaching their destination they have to be carried in on the backs of women from the boy's home, weeping loudly in their distress. There is no central marriage feast, though a goat is killed for the girls who accompany the bride, and no one from the girl's home, except for the bridesmaids, is present. The brilliant competitive dancing displays, mutual vituperations between the two families and general feasting which form part of Nguni marriage ceremonial, all are conspicuously absent in this area where the arrival of a bride hardly disturbs the even tenor of everyday life. It is of common occurrence for a bride, before arrival at her husband's kraal, to be taken to the village of the sister whose cattle the husband has used in the marriage. The sister must see the woman who will bear a wife for her son and will kill a goat in her honour. Blood-mixing ceremonies between bride and bridegroom to eliminate all dangers of sex intercourse are common over the whole area.

586 Barrenness and adultery are not grounds for divorce, though when a woman is barren her parents generally offer her sister, for whom, however, cattle must again be handed over. A peculiar feature of divorce in the Lowveld to-day is that the husband almost always keeps both the children and the cattle, except in rare cases where it can be proved that he has wrongfully driven away his wife, when he receives neither children nor cattle.

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RELIGION. In common with the other Bantu tribes of South Africa, the people of the Lowveld have ancestor worship. The form which it takes here bears many resemblances to that found among the Venda and also to that of the Shangana–Tonga though it differs from both in a number of ways. Characteristic of the religion of Lowveld tribes are the predominance of the beer offering to the almost complete exclusion of the blood sacrifice, the use of shrines and dedicated goats or cattle, the powers attributed to old beads and other objects once in the possession of the ancestors, the prominent part played by women, the virtual equality of ancestors on the mother's and father's side and the cult of the *dzjow* in which old men deceive women and the uninitiated by acting the part of ancestors supposed to be returning to the village after certain ceremonies.

The creator-god, to whom however no worship is directed, is known as Khudrwane, use of the term *Modimo* in this sense being in the Lowveld probably a Christian innovation. Belief in a sky-god, such as that of the south-eastern tribes, is absent, while spirits such as the mountain and river spirits believed in by Venda, and Tikoloshe, Impundulu and other half-mythical creatures who play so important a role in the everyday life and beliefs of Pondo and Xhosa are quite unknown in the Lowveld. Instead, one finds the *dzjow* or *dzozjane*, ancestral spirits who come after sunset after important religious ceremonies in the royal family, during the *Azwaru* drumming and sometimes, among Lobedu, at the installation of an important headman, and call in thin, wailing voices. Often they whistle out their own names or throw stones at the village, scolding people for having broken customs, till beer is brought to them and they are appeased. They are ancestors, yet they are only half-men with one leg and one arm instead of two;[1] they dwell in the sacred woods, and when they come no one is to leave the village, women and children shutting themselves up securely in their huts. The fact that the part is acted by a few old, trusted men is not known to many.

The sacred place at which offerings are made is not the cattle kraal

[1] Among Venda, *dzudzwi* are thought to be mountain spirits with one leg, one arm, &c., the sight of whom brings death to the traveller. They have no connexion with ancestor worship and are said to be mostly of Sotho origin. This is clearly a borrowing.

3: Krige E-5 (1928-1938)1938 FX14 Lovedu FX14

778 or back of the hut, as among Zulu-Xhosa, but a shrine in the court-yard of the chief hut. Lowveld shrines vary from family to family but are easily recognizable. A shrine may consist of a mound of earth, a stick and river pebble, a spot where a thithikwane lily has been planted or a long stick planted in the earth like the Shangana-Tonga shrine. The contents of these shrines also vary within a general pattern: the Lobedu royal family place the bones of a sacrificial goat or ox in the mound; other families bury two black river pebbles and a piece of a special kind of antheap, and there are many further variations. Always there are, in addition, charms given by the doctor to prevent the ancestors from causing trouble. Instead of a shrine, or even along with it, one may find a beast or goat dedicated to the ancestors, usually bearing the name of one of them, which will at all important offerings be made to drink of the beer given to the spirits.[1] Important national offerings, especially supplications for rain, are made at graves of deceased chiefs or the sacred wood in which chiefs are buried. Great importance is attached to objects, especially old beads, hoes, spears that have once belonged to the ancestors. These are handed down from generation to generation, are placed beside the shrine when an offering is made or may even be used instead of a shrine in a beer offering. Old beads are peculiarly important for ensuring the health of any one wearing them and are used in the curing of many illnesses caused by neglect of ancestors. Sacred drums 779 are to be found in every tribe; these are the *Ramana* drums, thought 534 to be inextricably bound up with the welfare of the tribe as a whole. Among the more southerly tribes of the area, these drums are smeared with the first-fruits when the chief eats the first-fruits, beaten on all important occasions such as the harvest offering and pierced on the death of the chief.

782 The officiator in important offerings is generally the father's sister or, if she be dead, the eldest sister in the family; but if she lives too far away the head of the family himself may officiate. In general, the officiator calls on ancestors both on his father's and on his mother's side and there may even be two shrines, side by side, one for the father's line, one for the mother's. There is no evidence of any differentiation between the four lines of grandparents to the exclusion

[1] The Venda pour the beer on the beast.

3: Krige E-5 (1928-1938)1938 FX14 Lovedu FX14

of the lines of the father's mother and mother's father, such as is mentioned by Stayt for the Venda. The complete absence of any awe or reverence when the Bantu approach their ancestors is seen in the loud talk, jokes and laughter of all except the officiators themselves, and the discussions that frequently take place between the officiator and his neighbours in the middle of proceedings as to what he should do next and how he should do it. As is the case with Europeans, some families are more religious than others, and the very human tendency to forget the gods when things go well is well marked. Some people are always giving to the gods, telling them of all important happenings in the family, giving them a share of any beer that arrives at the kraal, asking their blessings; others forget to perform even the harvest thanksgiving and, unless illness or other trouble comes to show the anger of the ancestors, years may elapse without any religious ceremony taking place.

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THE DOCTOR. No religious ceremony of any importance takes place without the co-operation and advice of the doctor; indeed the majority of offerings that are made are done on the advice of the doctor, who determines in every case all such details as which charms are to be used, whether any special relatives have to be present, what if any beads are to play a part. The great doctor is a figure of inter-tribal importance; he works not in one tribe but in many, a fact which largely accounts for the uniformity in the religious practices of different tribes, in contrast to the diversity found in any one tribe. All doctors are not, however, of the same importance. The herbalist, of whom there are hundreds, both male and female, has a limited sphere. He has inherited from his parents or some other relative, often, in the case of a woman, from her husband, one or more medicines or type of medical treatment such as the cutting of veins for blood-letting and a cure for epilepsy, and this he dispenses to all who come.

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The doctor, *par excellence*, is the bone-thrower who combines with his divining an extensive knowledge of medicine. There is nothing spectacular about the Sotho doctor; he wears no special or distinguishing dress; his methods are not directed to securing any dramatic effects. Unlike the doctor in Zulu-Xhosa society who is called to his profession by the spirits, undergoes a long period of *ukuthwasa* during

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which he acts in a strange manner, hears voices calling him and often runs amok, the Sotho bone-thrower learns his art in the same quiet manner as any other craft and completes his training not by any public ceremonial but by a private strengthening consisting of drinking water in which the bones have been cooked together with the blood of a cock to make him wakeful and clever. There is no objection to people practising their profession long before they have completed their training, so that doctors range from the novice to the renowned diviner of long standing. The profession, though open to all, is usually inherited from a relative; but there is an increasing number of men to-day who become doctors for the money they make out of it and without undergoing any extensive training.

The doctor associated with the new cult of possession that has within the past thirty years spread over the Lowveld from the east resembles in his methods the Zulu–Xhosa doctor. He is possessed by spirits who talk through him and order him to throw bones and guide him in the use of medicines, and he uses all manner of wonderful tricks. But he undergoes no initiation other than that of all possessed people. The cult is confined largely to women who, during possession, speak in a foreign tongue, said to be Thobolo or Kgaluka, but in reality a kind of gibberish. Possession takes the form of dancing to the accompaniment of tambourines, rattles and a special kind of drum beat, initiation into which is believed to cure the ailment which accompanied the first manifestations of the possessing spirit. These spirits are always those of relatives, usually on the mother's side, in contrast to the foreign spirits who are thought to possess Shangana-Tongs who have the same cult. Only a few of those who are possessed ever become doctors and then only when the possessing spirit was a doctor. They are the only class of Sotho doctor who receives inspiration direct from the spirits.

A class of doctor that does not belong to the Sotho culture yet is indispensable to Lowveld Sotho society, who is seldom or never a Sotho yet has a place in Sotho life, is the *nwkwaw* or Shangana-Tongs smeller-out. He divines chiefly by the head without much use of bones, is able to find things that have been hidden, and is the final judge or smeller-out of witches.

The doctor is not, in the minds of most people, clearly distinguished

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from the witch: it is generally argued that he who knows how to counteract wizards must himself be one, and Lowveld doctors are known to 'try' one another by sending lightning or familiars to their rivals to test their powers. Doctors have been openly accused of witchcraft. This confusion is, however, in no way detrimental to the practice of great doctors since not only is a doctor unlikely to work against a client when it is in the interest of his practice to please, but as there must always be a motive in evil-doing, witchcraft without intention being impossible, doctors harm only their enemies.

DAY AND NIGHT WIZARDS. The term *mulai*, wizard, is in the Lowveld equivalent to 'criminal' and implies evil intention, desire to kill others. In contrast to the Shangana-Tongs, there is thought to be no such thing as unintentional witchcraft. The wizard knows he is a wizard and harms others because he bears towards them feelings of envy or malice. The methods employed in witchcraft do not differ from those of good magic; the distinction between the two lies in the evil motives, injurious to social life, which lie behind witchcraft. Hence use of magic on one's possessions to hurt the fingers of whoever tries to steal them or sending animals to frighten a deserting wife into returning home is not witchcraft, though the technique is identical with that of the witch, because designed not to kill or injure seriously but to uphold the social order.

All tribes in the Lobedu culture area have a technical distinction between two classes of wizards—the night wizard (*mulai wa bustu*) and the day wizard (*mulai wa matsuru*). The night wizard, usually but not exclusively a woman, inherits his evil powers from his mother who teaches him the art in early infancy. His methods are direct: by going himself or sending familiars, various animals such as the stoat and *zwidudwane* (human beings whom he has killed and enslaved), he works his harm. He works mostly at night, and there exists a sort of society of wizards who dance together at night and recognize one another by day. The day wizard, on the other hand, does not necessarily come of a stock of wizards. Any one who uses medicine to poison or kill is a day wizard. Sending lightning, using people's footprints or pointing at them to harm them, poisoning food and beer, these are the methods of the day wizard in whose work the 'spell',

3: Krige E-5 (1928-1938)1938 FX14 Lovedu FX14
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754 i.e., telling the medicine, without any set phraseology, what to do, is important. Day wizards are chiefly men and it is said that, owing to the facility of obtaining bad medicine in towns and from foreign tribes to-day, this type of witchcraft has greatly increased.

In everyday life, however, a person is called a witch, whatever methods he has used, and in an accusation of witchcraft there is never any discussion whether the culprit is a day or night wizard. Moreover, there is in the minds of ordinary people considerable confusion about the type of witchcraft associated with each class, and it is possible to live among Lowveld people a long time without coming upon these distinctions. The night wizard is thus in Evans-Pritchard's terminology the witch, the day wizard the sorcerer; and the great distinction between sorcery and legitimate magic lies not in method but in intention.

273 535 SOCIAL IMPORTANCE OF BEER AND THE DANCE. It would be a mistake in discussing the main features of Lowveld society to leave out of count the social importance of beer and the use of the dance or *gusha* as a social institution, though neither is confined to these tribes. Beer, apart from its religious value, plays a part in social and economic life. It is continually being carried from one group to another, acting as a bond between people and establishing friendly relations. In the [184] Lowveld, in contrast to the Highveld, it is still of greater importance than money; while people may refuse to attend working parties for money, they will flock to one where beer is served. The *gusha* is a [534] dance in which women do the drumming while men playing reed pipes dance in a circle round the drums. It is, however, much more than a dance. It is an institution for maintaining friendship and reciprocity between groups, a way of showing sympathy on the death of a relative and the means by which subjects approach their chief for rain in time of drought. A *gusha* is often sent by one chief to another in the Northern Transvaal.

171 SOME COMPARISONS BETWEEN LOBEDU CULTURE AND THAT OF OTHER AREAS. The Lobedu culture complex represents a close blending of two cultures, that of the Lobedu who came south from somewhere in Rhodesia when the empire of Monomotapa was breaking up, bringing

3: Krige E-5 (1928-1938)1938 FX14 Lovedu FX14
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with them the Sacred Kingship and other culture elements, and that of certain Sotho peoples, from whom, it would seem, came the cult of the sacred drums associated with *komana* ceremonies and the typical Lowveld form of *bwamu* and *bjale* schools. Since these latter traits are absent, as far as our knowledge goes, from the Sotho other than those of the Northern Transvaal, the question of their origin is difficult to solve. The tribes in the south of the Lo' ..du culture area include the Khaha or Koni who appear to be related in some way to the Pulana and Pai south of the Olifants River who, van Warmelo thinks, belong to a very old sub-stratum of Sotho that occupied the Eastern Transvaal and Swaziland before the advent of the Swazi proper. It may be that the drum cult and other culture elements belong to these people, but the problem awaits more intensive research into the culture of Pulana and Pai.

The relationship of the Lobedu culture to that of the Venda who also came from the north is a close one, both in language and culture. In material culture, religion, the part played by women in social and religious life, Venda and Lobedu are very close indeed. There are, however, a number of well-marked differences which preclude identification of Venda and Lobedu. Though the Venda chief was hedged in with ceremonial in the old days, ritual suicide of the chief, the outstanding feature of the Lobedu, is quite unknown to them; no women chiefs are allowed among the Venda though there are women heads of districts; the custom whereby district heads send daughters to be wives of the chief is not found among them nor are disputed successions settled by the ordeal of opening the door. Venda initiation schools such as Domba and Thondo differ widely from those of the Lobedu; they have no *komana* drum cult, no *dzimu* or impersonation of ancestral spirits associated with their religion. On the other hand, the divining bowl so typical of Venda magic and the weaving of *masila* cloth are quite unknown to the Lobedu.

The similarities between the Lowveld tribes forming the Lobedu complex and the Sotho tribes of the Northern Transvaal Highveld are not as great as those between Venda and Lowveld tribes. Among the culture elements held in common are the general system of agriculture and division of labour, including bird-scaring by magical means; the same initiation schools with minor modifications are

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common to both; the *gaka* as a social institution and the koma sacred drum cult with accompanying *dipim*. The position of women is relatively high, though not as high as among Lowveld and Venda tribes; women may own cattle, are not as strictly excluded from contact with the cattle as among Nguni, while father's and mother's sides of the family are of almost equal importance.

Cultural differences between Highveld and Lowveld are evident in the general aspect of villages, which cluster together in the Highveld with high-walled and well-smeared courtyards, as well as in everyday pursuits. The Highveld woman stamps, generally in a sitting position in a hole in the hut floor,[1] threshes her corn by means of sticks instead of stampers and grinds her tobacco on a potsherd instead of with a stick in a serrated earthen pot, as do Venda and Lowveld tribes. The chief, whose chief wife is obtained with cattle contributed by every district headman in the tribe, is surrounded by no great ceremonial or secrecy; ritual suicide of the chief is unknown; the autocracy of the royal family is less pronounced than in the Lowveld; the custom of submitting in cases of disputed succession to the ordeal of the door is foreign to Highveld tribes, while women can never rule as chiefs or headmen except as regents for minor sons. In local government we find a tendency towards fewer and larger districts with correspondingly more powerful district heads. In law the ordeal is unknown; the elaborate Lowveld system of 'mothers' at court poorly developed; the interesting modern development of dealing with witchcraft by a system of wagers and use of the Shangana *mukwa* absent. Possession, ubiquitous in the Lowveld, is hardly present on the Highveld, while the cult of the ancestors has in most parts either disappeared or lost much of its meaning. One gets the impression that, owing perhaps to a difference in attitude towards and method of dealing with wizards in the old days, witchcraft has not the same hold on the minds of the people as in the Lowveld. Longer and closer contact with Europeans and the strong hold of Christianity have led on the Highveld to greater breakdown of tribal custom than is found in the Lowveld.

The nature of the culture we have been describing will perhaps be

[1] This difference is a modern one, due to adoption by Lowveld Sotho of the Shangana-Tonga wooden stamping-block.

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thrown into clearer relief if we compare it with the more salient features of that of the South-eastern tribes, especially the Zulu-Xhosa, for, though differing from one another, Venda and Highveld and Lowveld tribes fall into line as opposed to the culture of South-eastern tribes. The virtual equality in social life and religion of father's and mother's side of the family and the relatively high position of women stand in contrast to the strongly patrilineal Zulu-Xhosa where wife-beating is said to be more common than among Sotho, where women are regarded as strangers in their husband's village, have all their lives to observe strict rules of *hlonipha* towards their husband's people, and are excluded to a greater extent than Sotho women from political and religious rites. For a woman to marry a woman, as among Lowveld Sotho, is unknown to the South-eastern Bantu; nor have they anything corresponding to the great influence and power wielded by women in the households of their brothers, in dividing out the inheritance on the death of the head of the household and in all religious matters affecting the family.

All forms of preferential marriage other than sororate and levirate are absent from Zulu-Xhosa society where the *ukuhlobla* custom, whereby a girl can present herself for marriage at the kraal of a man she loves, gives girls somewhat greater freedom of choice than is enjoyed by Sotho girls. Courting in parties dressed up in their best, which takes up so much of the time of every young man among Nguni and Shangana-Tonga has no counterpart in Sotho society where, for the most part, husband and wife are 'born for' one another, while the use of love magic with its associated hysteria known as *ukukayisa* in girls of the South-eastern tribes is completely absent among the Sotho of the Northern Transvaal. Indeed, love magic is looked upon as a form of witchcraft and punished as such.

The private nature of the First-fruit ceremonies among Sotho of the Northern Transvaal in which strengthening and seclusion of the chief play no part whatever stands in strong contrast to the elaborate public eating of the first-fruits among Zulu-Xhosa which has a military character associated with the strengthening of the army unknown among Sotho. Initiation into adult life among the Zulu-Xhosa includes generally a puberty ceremony for boys which is not found in the Northern Transvaal, while the *komane* and *lucowe* for boys and

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the *lwale* for girls are entirely absent in the South-eastern tribes. Even the circumcision school, where it is present among Nguni, differs very greatly from that held among Sotho. In political organization, female succession and ritual suicide found in the Lowveld, though not among other tribes of the Northern Transvaal, are absent also from Zulu-Xhosa culture.

Ancestor worship among Zulu-Xhosa and Sotho, though fundamentally similar in meaning and function, differs considerably in its practice, the shrines of the Northern Transvaal, the importance of the beer offering as opposed to the blood sacrifice of the Zulu-Xhosa, the prominent part played by the father's sister as priestess, the importance attached to ancestors on the mother's side and the whole ritual of the sacred drums being foreign to Zulu-Xhosa. Nor is there any counterpart of the Zulu-Xhosa sky-god among the Sotho. Similarly the doctor, having essentially the same functions in the two societies, differs in Sotho society in his initiation, in methods employed for divining, in his relation to the ancestors.

In Nguni society there is a recognized pattern of expression for the mentally unbalanced and for certain forms of neurosis and hysteria. It is common for women to believe that they have been visited by and had intercourse with *tikoloshe*, the water dwarf; hysteria in girls is of frequent occurrence and is thought to be caused by love-magic; many people other than those who complete their training as doctors are thought to be *thwasa*-ing, run amok at night, wander for days in the veld or enter pools in search of a snake. In this manner many mentally unbalanced people have their recognized place in Nguni society. Among the Sotho, on the other hand, hysteria in girls is infrequent and not associated with love-magic and the whole system of *thwasa* prior to becoming a doctor unknown. In the Lowveld, the new and foreign cult of possession can be said to be similar but much too stereotyped to fulfil quite the same function. Might it be that there is definite maladjustment associated with these South-eastern practices not found among the Sotho, or is their existence merely a variant pattern of culture reflecting no basic difference?

The military character and warlike proclivities of the South-eastern Bantu who bred Chaka, the Black Napoleon, and for a hundred years held the white man in check on the Eastern province frontier

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Thonga FT6

are conspicuously absent from the tribes of the Northern Transvaal. Military organization is interwoven with many aspects of Nguni life and has left its stamp upon the people. Their age organization, much stronger and stricter than that of the Sotho, has by its association with the regimental system a military character; enrolment into a regiment is an important step in the life of each individual; strengthening of the army forms an important part of the yearly first-fruit ceremonies, while the Zulu even had military villages in which the men spent much of their time. All this is absent from the Lowveld where war never involved more than one or two regiments in what was little more than skirmishes for cattle, and the chief weapons, the bow and arrow, supplemented by spear and battle-axe, made fighting at close quarters unusual.

The South-eastern tribes, as also the Shangana-Tonga, have a much greater sense of display than is found among Sotho generally. To the young Zulu who spends his days courting the girls, dress and general appearance have an absorbing interest that is not found among northern Sotho; the beautiful regimental dress of Zulu and Swazi has no Sotho counterpart; doctors do not dress up to distinguish themselves from others; the Sotho bride who goes to her husband's kraal fully covered in a blanket has little wedding finery; while Sotho dancing lacks the dramatic and spectacular qualities of Nguni dances. In Sotho culture there is no place for the *giya*-ing, jumping, and shouting one's own praises in public, that plays so prominent a part in Zulu society. Nor does song among the Sotho, who like all Bantu are musical, occupy quite the same important position as among Nguni, where every child has its lullaby, every wedding new songs specially composed for the occasion, and every sib its praise song.

The Shangana-Tonga of the Lowveld fall midway between the culture of Zulu-Xhosa and that of the Northern Transvaal Sotho. Cattle in their society play no greater part than among Sotho; they have no milk taboos; in their agriculture they hardly differ from the Sotho except in having had one or two different crops which they are said to have introduced among Sotho. They are not strongly patrilineal like Zulu-Xhosa, the mother's side of the family plays as important a part as among Sotho in social life and religion, but they have no female

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L T 171 priestesses and their joking relationship between a man and his mother's brother is not found in Sotho society.

Like the Zulu-Xhosa, the Shangana-Tonga have no marriage with relatives, while they differ from both Zulu and Sotho in allowing inheritance of the mother's brother's *wife*. Women do not marry women in Shangana-Tonga society; their sexual rites associated with the moving of a village have no parallel elsewhere. The religious system of Shangana-Tonga resembles that of the Sotho more than it does the Zulu-Xhosa in the use of shrines and beer offerings, but the sacred drum cult is absent and the use of fowls in sacrifice has its parallel among southern Lowveld tribes only. Their smelling-out doctor, whose methods resemble those of the doctor in Zulu-Xhosa society, is not found among Sotho, but the ordinary bone-thrower hardly differs from the Sotho doctor either in methods or initiation. Of the northern Sotho initiation schools, only the *khúlu* and circumcision school are found among Shangana-Tonga, while Shangana-Tonga love of display, manner of dancing and singing resembles that of the Zulu-Xhosa. The similarities between Shangana-Tongas and the Sotho of the Lowveld are to be accounted for more by common influences in the past than by recent borrowings, though there is a considerable amount of diffusion to-day. The Shangana-Tonga of the Northern Transvaal Lowveld are very mixed: one tribe, that of Muhlava, came originally from Zululand, settling in its present habitat after a sojourn in Portuguese East Africa; others, like that of Nwamitwa who belongs to the great Valoyi family, trace their origin to the Nyai country beyond the Limpopo whence they came southwards towards the Tonga.

L S 171 Peaceful conditions, closer contacts between members of different tribes in the service of the white man, subjection to a uniform system of European law and administration which calls forth similar responses among different tribes, all are tending towards gradual elimination of marked tribal differences and greater uniformity in tribal custom and conditions. To-day the old Venda initiation schools have all but died out while Sotho schools are rapidly spreading into Vendaland; Christian missions are exerting similar influences among different tribes; young men returning from work in towns bring home everywhere a changed attitude towards tribal customs and morality and a more

3: Krige E-S (1928-1938)1938 FX14 Lovedu FX14
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individualistic outlook on life. With the inevitable disappearance in the near future of such distinctive elements as ritual suicide of the chief, marriage of women by women, and other characteristics typical of the culture of the Lowveld to-day, the Lobedu of the Lowveld tribes will tend to lose their individuality and become more and more like their neighbours.

ELLEN JESSEN KRIGE.

Résumé

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LA PLACE DES SOTHO DU TRANSVAAL NORD-ORIENTAL DANS LE COMPLEXE DES BANTOUS DU SUD

Les tribus sotho habitant le Lowveld du Transvaal nord-oriental, bien que faisant partie d'un grand ensemble culturel, englobant tous les peuples de l'Afrique du Sud qui parlent le sotho, accusent cependant un certain nombre de caractères distinctifs parmi lesquels on peut citer le suicide rituel du chef, la reconnaissance des femmes comme souverain, un culte des tambours sacrés. Ces phénomènes n'existent pas dans les tribus voisines. Les principaux aspects de cette civilisation sont brièvement indiqués sous les titres de: économie tribale; organisation politique et situation du chef; rites juridiques et tribunaux; familles et clans; éducation cérémonielle; mariage; religion et sorcellerie. L'étude se termine par des comparaisons; les différences constatées parmi les autres tribus bantoues du sud, en particulier le groupe Nguni, sont indiquées.